



AFTER THE FLOOD – GOT MOLD?

After natural disasters such as floods, excess moisture and standing water contribute to the growth of mold in homes and other buildings. If your home was flooded, be aware that mold may be present and can be a health risk for your family.

What makes mold grow in my home?

Mold grows best when there is a lot of moisture and can grow on almost any surface including: wood, ceiling tiles, wallpaper, paints, carpet, sheet rock and insulation. Moisture Control is the key to Mold Control: The sooner you can remove wet materials and begin drying floors, walls, and other surfaces, the less opportunity there will be for mold to grow.

Can exposure to mold hurt me?

Some people are not affected by mold. For others, breathing in mold can cause allergic reactions, throat or skin irritations, as well as breathing difficulties especially for people with weakened immune systems or lung diseases.

How do I recognize mold?

You may be able to recognize mold by:

- Sight – are the walls discolored or do they show signs of mold growth (small black or white specks) or water damage?
- Smell – do you smell a bad odor such as a musty, earthy smell or a foul stench?

How can I prevent it from growing in my home?

Cleaning up and drying out your home within 24 to 48 hours after being flooded will help prevent mold growth. Moisture Control is the key to Mold Control: The sooner you can remove wet materials and begin drying floors, walls, and other surfaces, the less opportunity there will be for mold to grow.

You should also remove all non-cleanable items such as furniture, carpet, wallpaper, etc... **When in doubt – take it out!**

Next you should clean all surfaces and cleanable wet items with water and detergent or a bleach solution. We recommend 1 cup bleach to 5 gallons water or NO MORE THAN 1 cup bleach to 1 gallon water. Never mix bleach with ammonia or other household cleaners. Be sure to open windows and doors to allow good air ventilation while you are cleaning. Wear a face mask while cleaning to prevent breathing in any fumes or mold that may be present. The State Department of Health recommends applying a borate-based detergent solution, without rinsing, as a last step after cleaning and disinfecting. This helps keep mold from growing again.

Who can I call if I have questions?

If you have questions about identifying mold, preventing it from growing or how to properly clean it in your home, contact WSU Extension at 740-1212 or the Health Department at 740-1222.

*This handout based on a CDC publication “**Protect Yourself from Mold**,” available at <https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/mold/index.html> and a WA State Department of Health publication “**Got Mold?**” available at <https://www.doh.wa.gov/YouandYourFamily/HealthyHome/Contaminants/Mold>*